



BUDGET COMMITTEE



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Senate Budget Committee Chairman Gregg Joins Senate Majority Leader Frist in Offering Amendment to Better Protect United States From Pandemics

WASHINGTON, DC – Senate Budget Committee Chairman Judd Gregg today joined Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist in offering an amendment to the *Deficit Reduction Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 2005* (S. 1932) that will better protect and prepare the United States in the face of a potential avian influenza crisis or other emerging pandemic. The amendment was offered in advance of President Bush's announcement today of the Administration's proposal for confronting the avian flu threat.

"This amendment addresses a pressing health and security need," said Chairman Gregg. "We must act now to protect Americans from a potential public health crisis and possibly prevent one. Funding is only one part of a larger strategy, however. We also must focus on enhancing applied research into pandemic and bioterror diseases and countermeasures; strengthen support of the vaccine industry; and provide the necessary liability protections to companies who manufacture pandemic and bioterror countermeasure products."

"The funding included in this amendment is a major step towards ensuring America has the resources needed to detect, identify and contain the spread of avian flu in humans," said Majority Leader Frist. "The President's bold and decisive leadership today reflects his understanding of the urgency of confronting this issue. While we don't need to panic, we do need to be prepared. And I'm proud to be joined by Senator Gregg in leading on this issue to help protect the health, well-being and security of the American people."

The amendment directs \$3.954 billion to:

- \$2.8 billion for the development and stockpiling of antivirals and vaccines for influenza and other emerging pandemics;
- \$577 million to intensify surveillance of influenza and other newly emerging pandemics; and
- \$577 million to enhance local, state and federal preparedness for influenza and other newly emerging pandemics

Chairman Gregg and Majority Leader Frist earlier this year introduced the *Protecting America in the War on Terror Act* (S. 3), and Chairman Gregg introduced the *Bioterror and Pandemic Preparedness Protection Act* (S. 1437) in July. Provisions from both of those bills were included in the *Biodefense and Pandemic Vaccine and Drug Development Act* (S. 1873), which was passed by the HELP Committee on Oct. 18th.